

RSB – ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE BIOMATERIALS
RSB Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Guidelines

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Approved for Certification

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Note on the use of this document

These guidelines are designed to help the operator understand the RSB social impact assessment (SIA) process.

The guidelines should be read together with the RSB Impact Assessment Guidelines (RSB-GUI-01-002-01) which provide a roadmap of the various processes required to complete the RSB impact assessment process and stakeholder engagement process, the latter being central to the completion of the SIA.

The SIA will need to be integrated with other social impact specialist studies that may be required by the operator.

These guidelines can be used by the auditor to get a better understanding of key aspects to be considered during the certification process.

This document does not serve as the basis for verification of compliance or audits of operators. This document is not a normative document.

Introduction

For the majority of agro-industrial developments, there is potential for positive and negative socio-economic impacts. The purpose of this document is to provide a guideline for conducting a social impact assessment (SIA) of operations seeking certification against the RSB Standard. Such an assessment could be undertaken as part of a broader environmental and social impact assessment of the proposed development, or as an individual specialist study as required by the RSB screening tool (RSB-GUI-01-002-02). However, if a SIA is required, it is likely that other specialist studies may also be required, such as a land rights assessment and/or a food impact assessment. The social impact assessment will provide baseline information on the social context and contribute to the identification, assessment and mitigation of the socio-economic impacts. This data will also be necessary when complying with RSB Principle 5. The RSB Principles & Criteria were used as a basis for developing these guidelines and a variety of references related to SIAs, biofuels and performance standards were used.

CONTENTS

Note on the use of this document	2
Introduction	3
1. Choosing an approach to SIAs	4
2. Establishing baseline conditions	4
3. Identifying potential socio-economic impacts associated with biofuel and biomaterial developments.....	6
4. Assessing the significance of key issues and impacts.....	8
5. Recommending mitigation measures.....	8
6. Developing a monitoring plan	9
7. Structuring the SIA report	10
Appendix 1: Example of a Terms of Reference for a SIA	11
Appendix 2: References.....	13
Appendix 3: Participatory methods	14

1. Choosing an approach to SIAs

Traditionally, SIAs were undertaken in a very top-down manner that involved the expert social scientist collecting socio-economic data from various sources and analysing it to make his/her own neutral interpretation and prediction of the potential social impacts of a proposed development. However, the development of participatory approaches over the last 30 years has resulted in a shift to more participatory approaches in ESIs and SIAs. These approaches recognise the value of the knowledge and experiences of local stakeholders and affected parties, and attempt to tap into this knowledge to inform the impact assessment. In this situation, the social scientist will act as “a facilitator of knowledge sharing, interpretation and reporting of impacts” (Barbour, 2007). This is considered a bottom-up approach.

Compliance with RSB Principle 2 will require the adoption of a participatory approach in the SIA. Such an approach will assist practitioners in ensuring that the recommendations of the SIA are the outcome of a consensus-driven stakeholder engagement process. However, the constraints to stakeholder participation mean that it would be inappropriate to rely entirely on the stakeholders to analyse the significance of the socio-economic impacts, as this may not provide an adequate analysis of the impacts. Due to different world views, and potentially contradictory and competitive self-interests of the various stakeholder groups, it is unlikely that they would be able to agree on the nature and significance of all the social impacts. Any attempt to reach consensus on the impacts would require an onerous amount of time and effort from the facilitators and the participants to ensure that all stakeholders were in agreement. This level of commitment would be difficult to secure and is not really necessary. These constraints can be overcome by using a combination of the participatory and expert approaches mentioned above. This is therefore the approach that is recommended for SIAs assessing operations.

The process of collecting and analysing socio-economic impacts and assessing the potential impacts in an objective, balanced and holistic manner is not easy or straightforward, particularly in developing country contexts where there may be very little reliable and detailed spatially specific socio-economic data. The research and assessment process can be even more difficult if a participatory approach is adopted. It is recommended therefore that experienced and skilled social researchers and facilitators are contracted to undertake the socio-economic impact assessment. It would be preferable if these persons had an in-depth knowledge of the affected areas, communities and their languages, but if this is not possible, then the feasibility of using experienced socio-economic professionals working together with key local informants and/or facilitators/translators needs to be considered.

2. Establishing baseline conditions

The collection of baseline socio-economic data on the locality and region is required as part of the SIA for two reasons: firstly, to inform the assessment of the potential impacts, and secondly, to provide the baseline data against which all future monitoring of the actual impact of the development can be measured/compared. Consequently, the baseline assessment must provide a holistic description of the historical context and current socio-economic conditions, but it must also provide some quantifiable data that can be used for comparing against the results of future impact monitoring.

It is therefore necessary to collect data on the following socio-economic aspects of the project area and its surrounds:

- The cultural heritage and history of the area
- The local and regional institutions, governance structures and capabilities
- Institutional dynamics and relationships between stakeholders
- The size, structure and growth of the local and regional populations
- Population movement trends
- Spatial distribution of the population and settlement patterns
- Land rights and use
- Resource rights and use (i.e. water, grasses, medicinal plants, wild foods, trees, fish, game, etc.)
- Local livelihoods (i.e. employment, businesses, farming, and natural resource based livelihoods)
- Household incomes and poverty
- Agricultural practices (i.e. seasonal and inter-annual patterns of land use, use of inputs, cultivation, livestock, aquaculture, etc.)
- Food security (please see also RSB Food Security Guidelines RSB-GUI-01-006-01)
- Living conditions
- Health conditions
- Education
- Crime
- Traditional cultural practices, graves and sacred sites

Given the wide range of issues needing investigation from a variety of sources, it is recommended that a detailed research plan and specific research tools (e.g. questionnaires, interview schedules, etc.) are developed prior to initiation of the research. These plans and tools can then be adapted in the field, if necessary.

A variety of data sources and methods will need to be used to collect and analyse this qualitative and quantitative information. Given that a combined approach (expert and participatory) is required, the data should be sourced partially from stakeholders and partially from other existing sources. These might include existing demographic and economic statistics, other studies that have been undertaken, satellite images and aerial photographs of the project area and surrounds, and relevant socio-economic literature and theory. Data from stakeholders can be obtained from interviews and workshops with government officials and representatives, local leaders, local residents, teachers, health workers, agricultural extension officers, NGO/CBO workers and business persons. When interviewing or meeting with local residents, care should be taken to ensure that a representative sample of residents involved in all the different kinds of livelihood activities is engaged. These interviews could be undertaken with groups or with individuals. Data can also be obtained from field observations and a variety of participatory appraisal methods (many of which can be used in an interview or workshop context). Some of these methods are mentioned in the RSB Impact Assessment Guidelines (RSB-GUI-01-002-001) and a list of reference material for such methods is provided at the end of this guideline document.

In cases where there is little or unreliable official demographic and economic data on the local population, it will be necessary to collect primary data on these aspects from local residents. In some cases, it may be possible to obtain data on population size and distribution on a village-by-village basis from the local authorities, but this data is not likely to provide sufficient insight into local livelihoods and land-use practices. Consequently, it will probably be necessary to undertake a representative survey of local households to get more insight into the structure of the local population, and the livelihoods and land/resource use practices of local households.

This will be particularly important in cases where the activity of the operator may result in a loss of agricultural land and/or resettlement, as the results of the survey can be used to estimate the potential scale of the resettlement impact and the costs in terms of compensation.

Investigation of the spatial distribution and density of the local population is particularly important in cases where large-scale estates are proposed in contexts where the indigenous people use rural land under traditional forms of tenure and agriculture. This information can be used to make recommendations on how the location and boundaries of the proposed estate can be modified to avoid or minimise agricultural land loss and resettlement impacts for local people. Recent aerial photographs are the most reliable source of such information. However, in the absence of this, satellite images can help identify areas of cultivated land, and participatory mapping and transects can be undertaken with local residents to identify the spatial distribution of the population and various land and resource uses.

It should be noted that the tools and methods for assessing impacts on food security, land and water rights that are also relevant to the SIA are described in more detail in these guideline documents:

- RSB Food Security Guidelines (RSB-GUI-01-006-01)
- RSB Guidelines on Water Rights and Social Impacts (RSB-GUI-01-009-02)
- RSB Guidelines for Land Rights (RSB-GUI-01-012-01)

3. Identifying potential socio-economic impacts associated with biofuel and biomaterial developments

There are a large number of potential socio-economic impacts associated with biofuel and biomaterial developments. A list of key socio-economic issues and impacts that should be investigated and assessed is provided in Table 1. The investigation of impacts should however not be limited to this prescribed list, but should depend rather on the local context and the nature of the proposed development. It is necessary to consider the direct impacts associated with the proposed development as well as potential secondary and cumulative impacts. While the direct impacts may be of low significance, their significance might be elevated when considered in the broader context (for example, loss of access to land and natural resources due directly to the project development and indirectly due to densification, in-migration and resettlement). The process of identifying the potential socio-economic impacts should begin with an examination of the issues and impacts raised by stakeholders during a scoping phase.

Table 1. Potential socio-economic impacts associated with biofuel or biomaterial developments

Issue	Impact
Economic	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased employment • Increased income-earning opportunities (e.g. sale of goods and services) • Increased cash for consumption and savings/investment (e.g. in livestock, education, dwellings, etc.) <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of labour for other existing livelihood activities • Loss of land and natural resources • Less access to land (reduced availability) • Tenure security/insecurity
Resettlement (either physical or economic)	<p>Negative impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of land, dwellings and other physical resources • Loss of crops and cleared arable land • Loss of natural resources and grazing land • Loss of land rights and entitlements • Disruption of social networks and relationships • Disruption of relationship with the land and natural resources
Food security	Please see RSB-GUI-01-006-01 RSB Food Security Guidelines for more information on positive and negative impacts.
In-migration, population growth and concentration	<p>Negative impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Densification and concentration of settlement • Social tensions related to competition and differences between locals and in-migrants • Less compliance with local norms and regulations
Social	<p>Negative impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased conflict: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Due to competition between groups for employment and other economic benefits ○ Due to tensions between resettled households and residents in host areas and neighbouring areas ○ Due to increased pressure on land and natural resources, and tensions around land administration and land-use management ○ Due to increased crime

Issue	Impact
Cultural heritage sites and resources	Negative impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damages or loss of graves, sacred sites and important cultural heritage sites and resources • Movement of graves • Limitation in access to areas or resources of cultural value
Health and welfare	Negative impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased access to sufficient potable water • Increased risk of HIV/AIDs and other diseases • Increased crime • Decreased access to natural resources for traditional medicines • Decreased school attendance • Increased traffic safety risks • Health risks from labour conditions, pollution and sanitation problems • Health risks associated with introduction of vectors, especially waterborne vectors due to irrigation • Increasing need for basic infrastructure and services
Governance impacts	Negative impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources needed for management of resettlement • Changes in administration of land rights and use • Increased pressure on land and natural resources, and tensions around land administration and land-use management • Development of concentrated villages and urban centres • Increased demand for basic infrastructure and services • Need to maintain roads and other basic infrastructure and services • Management of increased social tensions

4. Assessing the significance of key issues and impacts

The identified impacts should be rated according to their significance by considering the spatial extent, time-scale, likelihood, severity, and confidence levels. The method should rate impacts as very high, high, moderate or low, and positive or negative, and should be used by all the practitioners involved in the specialist studies to assess the significance of the full range of impacts from social to ecological to physical, during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the activities of the operator. Any impacts that have a ‘very high’ negative significance rating and cannot be mitigated to lower significance levels might be considered fatal flaws. This could result in the project not being certified.

5. Recommending mitigation measures

It is not possible to anticipate the possible mitigation measures needed as these will depend on the nature and extent of the impacts, the local context and the practical constraints. The mitigation measures recommended for each impact need to be practical and effective in:

- Eliminating the impact
- Reducing/increasing either the temporal or spatial scale of the impact
- Reducing its severity
- Reducing the risk of the impact occurring

The impact rating table needs to indicate how the mitigation measure will change one or more of these rating factors. For negative impacts, the mitigation measures should reduce the significance levels, but for beneficial impacts the mitigation measures should enhance the benefits. Usually the mitigation measures will be specific to an individual impact, but sometimes they will be relevant to all the impacts that fall under a specific issue (i.e. governance).

In cases where biomaterials projects are developed in regions of poverty, or if the project will result in some voluntary resettlement or food security impacts, then there will be a need to develop a Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) as described in the Land Rights Impact Assessment (RSB-GUI-01-012-01) and a rural and social development plan (as required from Principle 5) during the implementation phases of the project. The process of developing these plans needs to be a process of negotiation (based on Free Prior and Informed Consent - FPIC) involving all the key stakeholders. In the case of a RAP, it will also be necessary to do a complete census of the affected households. However, implementation of the RAP and rural and social development plan does not have to have been completed by the time certification is applied for, as implementation may be time consuming or planned to take place over a few years. However, a preliminary policy document on resettlement (RAP) and the rural and social development plan are both needed for RSB certification. These should be compliant with the requirements of IFC Performance Standard 5.

The ESMP should

- Include all measures that were selected to mitigate the identified impacts
- Address other issues as identified in Step 1.3 of the RSB Screening (RSB-GUI-01-002-02)
- Contain measures that need to be taken into account to ensure that labour rights are protected

6. Developing a monitoring plan

Given that the RSB Impact Assessment Process and ESMP will be used by the RSB certification bodies in the certification process, it will be necessary to develop a monitoring plan that will facilitate ongoing assessment of the impacts of the operator's activity. Consequently, the social expert needs to develop some recommendations with respect to which specific indicators (developed during the project plan) should be monitored, when, by whom, and how. These recommendations should be sufficiently detailed to allow the responsible persons to be able to collect the data, analyse it and use it to assess project performance. Given the need to demonstrate compliance with the RSB principles, the indicators will need to cover each of the following issues:

- FPIC of affected stakeholders
- Labour rights and employment conditions
- Land rights
- Water rights

- Food security
- Socio-economic development
- Benefits for women, youths, indigenous and vulnerable persons

7. Structuring the SIA report

Each of the specialist reports should follow the same structure and format. A suggested structure for the SIA report (as part of the ESMP) is as follows:

#	Section Title	Contents
1	Summary	This should provide a summary of the specialist study including the impacts, conclusions and recommendations.
2	Introduction	The introduction should provide brief background information, the terms of reference for the study, and the study team.
	Project description	An overview of the proposed development, including details of the agricultural, industrial and auxiliary components as well as the nature and extent of persons to be employed on the project, and any social development components.
3	Methodology	This section should indicate what data sources and research methods were used, as well as the methods of data analysis.
4	Description of the social environment	This section should provide an in-depth description of the regional and local socio-economic environment within which the proposed project is to be located.
5	Impact assessment and mitigation measures	This section should form the bulk of the report. It should identify and discuss each of the individual impacts and use the impact ratings method to rate their significance before and after mitigation, as well as during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the project. For each impact, the recommended mitigation measures needed in order to reduce the negative impacts and enhance the positive impacts associated with the proposed development should be discussed. Attention should be drawn to any very high and irreversible impacts that cannot be mitigated as these may be fatal flaws that prevent the project from going ahead, and detailed justification for such a significance rating will need to be provided.
6	Monitoring recommendations	This section should identify the key indicators that should be monitored over time, and the methods that should be employed.
7	Conclusion	This should provide a summary of the context and impacts.
8	Recommendations	The recommendations should focus on the suggested mitigation measures.
9	References	A list of all the references and sources.
10	Appendices	These should include key sources of data/results that informed the study, data collection forms/questionnaires used, pictures and other lists or long tables that could not be included in the text of the report.

Appendix 1: Example of a Terms of Reference for a SIA

The primary objectives of this study will be:

- a) To provide a detailed description of the socio-economic environment in and around the project area.
- b) Analyse the potential impacts of the proposed project.
- c) Provide guidelines for limiting or mitigating negative impacts and optimising benefits.

The proposed project could result in the following impacts:

- The relocation of households, which will impact on the livelihoods of affected households.
- The creation of employment, particularly during the construction phase of the project, which may increase local opportunities for new economic activities.
- The expectation of a large number of jobs, which may not be met, or may result in an influx of outsiders into the area which could result in heightened tension in the surrounding communities.
- Noise and air emissions from the plant, which may impact surrounding communities.
- The decreased safety of other road uses due to project-related transportation.
- The loss of land available for agricultural production and subsequent decrease in food security.
- The loss of access to areas with natural resources.
- The loss of communal resources.
- A possible reduction in soil fertility and, hence, productivity of the soil after development.
- Changes in authority structures in local communities.
- Increased stress on social infrastructure and services.

The specific terms of reference are as follows:

1. Describe the local socio-economic environment with particular reference to the communities that will be directly affected by the project, including the number of people currently employed and the extent of existing entrepreneurialism in the area.
2. Determine the current land use within the development area that is likely to be affected.
3. Working closely with the consultant doing the RAP as described in the RSB Land Rights Impact Guidelines (RSB-GUI-01-012-01), integrate the issues of the resettlement plan within the SIA when the number of households (and people) that need to be resettled has been determined.
4. Assess the local social infrastructure (health, education, markets, community).
5. Identify any sites of cultural-historical importance.
6. Describe the formal and informal governing structures.
7. Gain an understanding of cultural beliefs and practices, particularly those relating to sites of cultural significance that could be affected.
8. Determine the job creation potential of the biofuel operations, both permanent and temporary jobs during set-up and implementation.
9. Discuss the division of tasks and other relevant gender issues with special attention to job creation potential within the project.
10. Identify income and expenditure trends.
11. Describe the local historical context.

12. Describe landownership and property rights.
13. Assess the significance of potential environmental and social impacts on the local populace and the district.
14. Identify local development needs and problems, and evaluate how the project could contribute to a sustainable community development programme.
15. Investigate possible impacts of the project on health, livelihoods, income levels, education levels, food security and other factors relevant to the affected community's ability to participate in the potential economic benefits the project may offer.
16. Provide recommendations to mitigate negative impacts and optimise positive impacts.

Appendix 2: References

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Appendix 3: Participatory methods

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